

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, October 1, 1970

Postscripts by Jack Post

The thinking animal that we call man does strange things considering that he is endowed with all those brains, things which unthinking nature automatically controls. If too many rabbits breed in a given territory, foxes will proliferate until the rabbit population falls back to normal; or if there are no foxes, rabbits will multiply until they use up the available food supply with the same result. Not so with homo sapiens. He finds ways to breed more and more until he has overcrowded his world to the point of extinction, allowing no more room either for himself or for the endless other forms of life.

Occasionally, though, man leads his pets along with him down the impossible road. Dogs and cats, able to adapt to our "civilized" environment, multiply under man's protection, too often to find that man will not assume responsibility for the animal he has allowed to come into existence, with the result that the animal, thrown back on nature, must fend for himself or die.

Duxbury is no better, nor any worse than other habitations of man in neglecting, or even abandoning its dependent animals. We allow our pets to breed unwanted puppies or kittens which all too often are not properly cared for, even turned loose to exist as they can. Those who do survive become strays, a nuisance at large, and a problem when rounded up and penned.

In Duxbury we have had a pound from time beyond memory, but in recent years it has been allowed to descend into a dog ghetto with three dirty, often muddy runs, alive with bacteria, tucked in behind a collapsing shed, amid piles of broken street signs and scrap two-by-fours. Some water and some dog meal is available when the dog officer has time to attend to the matter, but no one is responsible for cleaning the pens, even if it were possible in this location.

At the March Town Meeting, provision for a new dog pen was included in a rider to the Highway Department garage, but the price was shoved so high that the town quite correctly voted against the expenditure. Now in advance of a special Town Meeting to be called for October or November, bids for a new pound are being taken this week. This time the dogs may have a better chance.

Meanwhile, a group of properly concerned citizens formed the Standish Humane Society and have been tackling head on the problem of what to do right now. When they know dogs have been brought in (which is now always), they visit the kennel, walk the dogs, contribute supplementary canned meat to the meal diet, and above all, try to find homes for the unhappy strays. Beyond this, the society hopes to broaden its education program, begun with a Kindness Club that has attracted many children, in to adult understanding of the necessity of spaying females, of licensing all dogs, and in general of controlling rather than neglecting pets.

The devoted enthusiasts of the Humane Society need more help than they are getting, both in effort and in money. Expenses do not run high, but to put out literature available from the American Humane Society costs something; so does a few cans of supplementary food; and so do ads in the Clipper, run to find some puppy a happy home. If you had an appeal for a few dollars, look it up in that pile on your desk and send in something. If you could give some time to the effort, that would be much appreciated too. It would doggone well prove how human you are.